



Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News

Rep. Louise Slaughter signs a check steadied by, from left, Vince Clark, a representative of Rep. Jack F. Quinn; Mayor Anthony M. Masiello; and Deputy County Executive Carl J. Calabrese.

Michigan Avenue historic district in line for \$2 million in federal funds

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NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Federal, county and local officials marked today's 50th anniversary of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision by presenting \$2 million in federal funding for improvements to the historic Michigan Avenue Preservation District.

However, it may be a while before the money reaches the historic district — if at all.

The \$2 million — which was secured by Rep. Jack F. Quinn, R-Hamburg, and Rep. Louise M. Slaughter, D-Fairport — is coming from the House of Representatives' proposed highway and transit bill. Another version of the bill also passed in the Senate, but neither version has been passed on to President Bush, who opposes the bills.

Slaughter acknowledged the holdup.

"All money is stalled," Slaughter said. "This bill has passed both houses, but we may not send it to the White House until after the election."

Officials came out Monday to the Colored Musicians Club, a landmark in the historic district, to announce the \$2 million grant. If released, the money would pay for infrastructure and other improvements for the historic district, which is bounded by Broadway, Nash, William and Elm streets. Planned improvements include trees and landscaping, new signs, pedestrian lighting and sidewalks.

City officials hope to have the improvements completed by the time the NAACP holds its annual convention here in October 2005.

"We want to have this area be a showcase," said Tim Wanamaker, executive director for the city's Office of Strategic Planning.

Having the convention here is of significant importance because the Niagara Movement — the forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People — was planned here.

Headed by W.E.B. DuBois, the Niagara Movement was founded in 1905 and developed a plan to obtain equal economic and educational opportunities and end segregation. The movement evolved into the NAACP in 1909.

It was in Michigan Street Baptist Church where the Niagara Movement was planned. In addition, both Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington spoke there.

Jazz greats such as Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday and Lena Horne also performed in the Colored Musicians Club on Broadway.

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